

# Museum

## MEMOS

Volume 1

June 7, 2022

Editor: Grace Linder

## Our Year of Anniversaries!

The Clay County Historical  
Society turns 50!

The Museum has been in  
its current location 5 Years!

In August of 1972, 20 concerned citizens came together to form the Clay County Historical Society.

The Museum held its Grand Opening in September of 2017.



In honor of the anniversaries,  
we're hosting two events!

Come participate in  
our Coloring Contest!  
Open to K-5th grade  
children.

Join our First Annual  
Scavenger Hunt and  
find a piece of Clay  
County History!

Event details can be found on pages 12 & 13.

Become a  
member and  
help us  
achieve our  
goals!

More info on page 9

## A BRIEF HISTORY

BY JEFF GAISER

DIRECTOR

01

This year we are celebrating the 5th year of the Grand Opening of your downtown Museum and the 50th anniversary of the Clay County Historical Society. I thought it might be beneficial to highlight some of the events in the Museum's and the Society's history.

The first attempt to form the Clay County Historical Society occurred in May 1940. However, before it could get officially started, World War II began and the effort was discarded. The Society was finally and officially created in August 1972. The Society then created the Clay County Museum within the old City Hospital building in 1975.



Most artifacts collected at the beginning came from the Clay Center Library Club which had acted as an unofficial historical society for several years. By the end of 1975, the Museum's collection had 367 artifacts and 628 documents. Throughout the next few decades, the collection would grow by the hundreds each year and in 1993, the Clay County Commissioners passed a resolution allowing the Historical Society to store non-current Clay County records.

It was decided in 2011 the old City Hospital building no longer had enough space to comfortably house our ever-growing collection. Thanks to Cathy Haney, the Society was able to purchase the Orr's Furniture City building and warehouse downtown. The future of the Society and Museum were looking promising, and then things changed in 2016.

In June of 2016, we lost Cathy Haney. There is not enough room to say what Cathy meant to this Museum and this community. She is the reason our Museum is where it is today. In her honor, the Historical Society Board voted to officially name our research area, The Cathy Haney Research Library. After Cathy's passing, I took over as Museum Director.

Then the Historical Society attempted to get an initiative placed on the ballot in 2016. If passed, the initiative would have raise public support from \$50,000 to about \$110,000. Unfortunately, it failed to make it on the ballot. Things became worse when we lost the current funding from the County. However, the Clay County Commissioners stepped forward and found another way to support the Museum. The public of Clay County now supports the Museum with \$80,000 per year.

Finally, 2016 was also the year the Clay County Commissioners notified the Historical Society that they needed the Museum out of the old City Hospital by early January of 2017. Frantic packing of the Museum began in early December.

With the help of several local volunteers, Kings Moving & Storage from Junction City, and Americorp Group from Colorado, moving started on January 9th, 2017 and was complete ten days later. Despite the hardships of 2016, the first floor of the Museum was ready for the Grand Opening during Pictique of 2017.

After dwindling interest and lowered volunteer numbers, it was decided in 2018 to discontinue hosting large special events like Pioneer Festival. The Museum still wanted to provide small events for the community, so in February 2019, through the State of Kansas Attorney General, we obtained our 1st traveling exhibit, the Magna Carta. In September of 2020, we rented our 2nd traveling exhibit, Imprinting the West: Manifest Destiny, Real and Imagined just in time for the grand opening of our second floor exhibits. Unfortunately, COVID-19 had everything shut down and we were unable to celebrate the occasion.

We are slowly getting back into things in the aftermath of COVID. Visitor numbers are slowly starting to pick back up. We're also receiving lots of donations to the collection.

## 02

### A DAY AT OUR MUSEUM

BY DIANA SHANER  
CURATOR OF ARTIFACTS

A normal day at the museum is one of unpredictability. One may come in the door with the thoughts of putting an artifact description in the spreadsheet, but soon be sidetracked with another project that pops up.

The day can begin with sharing what may have happened the evening before or the morning we walk in. There is also holding discussions of what needs to be done to better the system we use. Sometimes it's deciding how to better show the community how we keep track of the information that we have found while researching the county.

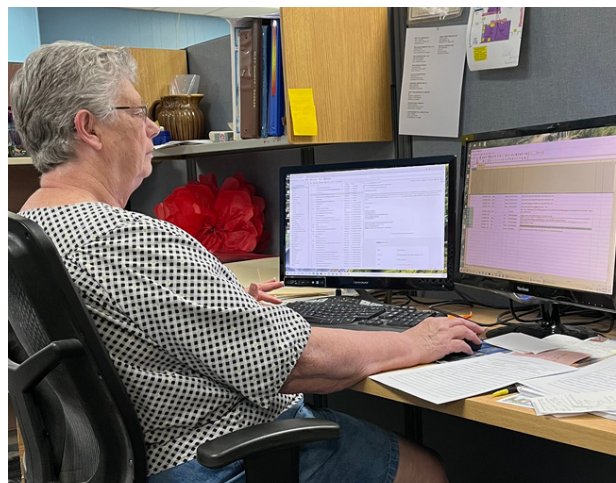
The next thing you know we are doing a follow up to see how much background we can gather that is within our walls.

We usually have at least one person call or email a day asking for information or help with genealogy. Sometimes this can take as little as half an hour but the possibility is that two hours can go by faster than a person realizes.

When things are starting to slow down for the day, usually a half hour before quitting time, you finally have the time to do what you had originally set out to do that morning.

With this being an average day, in the last few month we have done research on: several buildings in Clay Center, several citizens of Clay Center, the Clay Center City Fire department and how the trophies and banners were won. A story is coming soon on the first 40 years of our Fire Department.

We have also received donations from four different estates recently that contained wonderful pieces of Clay County's heritage.



# 03

## MY CORNER BY GRACE LINDER CURATOR OF DOCUMENTS

Life is always busy here at the museum! My title may be Curator of Documents, but I wear a lot more hats than just that. I have taken over as Social Media Manager which puts me in charge of our Facebook page and website. I've been trying to post to Facebook more regularly, but Facebook often gets pushed to the side when we have bigger projects going on. I've also been slowly updating our website over the past year.

I also recently took on the job of grant writing for the museum. Grant writing is something I've never done before, but I'm willing to learn and try something new. So far, with the help of board member Deb Hammond, I've applied for one and am in the process of writing a second.

Research is a big part of what we do here and I think it would be all I'd do if I could. I've found that I really enjoy researching, either for a project or just for fun. I even discovered that I'm distantly related to a store owner from Clay Center in the early 1900s.



# 04

## RECENT ACQUISITION

This interesting WW2 U.S.M.C.R. trunk was brought to us in April by Mark Skinner. The trunk belonged to his grandfather.

The funny story about this trunk is how we received it. Mr. Skinner was incredibly helpful and packed the trunk with items he believed we'd want. The neat thing about the trunk was the lock still worked perfectly. In fact, it worked a little too perfectly as Mr. Skinner put the key to the lock inside the trunk for safe keeping and closed the lid and locked it. Needless to say, our attempts at picking the lock didn't work and a proper locksmith was called.



05

## 1986 MORGANVILLE CENTENNIAL PART 1

BY PAT GILBERT

*Be on the lookout! This story will be published in several parts throughout future newsletters.*

Where were you August 16, 1986? If you have any ties to Morganville, you were probably at the Centennial Celebration that was being held for the city of Morganville that day. I know I and my family were! If you don't remember, the museum has video of the parade and some of the events of the day. You might see yourself in the video and it will jog your memory.

An article from the Clay Center Dispatch on July 17th, 1986 told what you could expect to happen in Morganville that day. "Kick-Off for the festivities will be a parade which will start at 12:30 p.m.; followed by a muzzle loader contest to start at 1:00 p.m. Also offered for the visitor, will be an old car and equipment display, arts, and crafts booths and a display of antiques and old photos which will be held at the Morganville Community Building".

Also listed was the Avanti Club offering a tour of Morganville homes at 4 p.m. The United Methodist Women offering an ice cream social and the Community Club serving Bar-B-Que in the evening. Entertainment in the evening was the Horizons, Crossroads and Grain Belters. There would be T-shirts, cookbooks and souvenirs for sale. Arnie Knoettgen served as chairman. If you think it sounds like a full day, it was! To Be Continued...



# CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

We do quite a bit of research around here. Using research, both ours and that of a local historian, we've decided we are going to start sharing the stories of Clay County. We've been hard at work continuing our research on the Dexter family and their involvement with the early history of Clay Center. We are also working on a story of the first 40 years of the Clay Center Fire Department. Our plan is to release them on our website as soon as they are written. Future stories will be placed on our website in areas you must be a Historical Society member to access.

ALONZO F. DEXTER



## 07

### THANK YOU!

We currently have some wonderful volunteers and interns that we'd like to recognize for their hard work.

Volunteer - Jane Reasoner: Jane has been a huge help with scanning our backlog of documents and photos.

Volunteer - Frankie Murrin: Frankie has always been there to help us any time we've needed him.

Volunteer - Jerry Callan: Jerry is always willing to lend a hand when we need artifacts delivered or recycling taken away.

Volunteer - Arlan Habluetzel: Arlan comes in to check and replace furnace filters for us.

Intern - Brett Hemphill: Brett has been in charge of checking artifact locations in our warehouse storage area for inaccuracies.

Intern - Lane Sherbert: Lane has been helping us with research.

## 08

### NEWS

Jeff gave a presentation to the County Commissioners at their meeting on May 9th. The presentation took the Commissioners through our accessioning process.

Before board meetings, our current board members have been learning the behind the scenes of the museum.

We recently acquired a new treasurer. Thank you, Terri!

Service Day was June 5th. The museum receiving a much needed cleaning! A big thanks to the Covenant Church!

Happy Birthday, Jeff! Our wonderful director turned 59 in April.

The local Big Lakes group came by for a tour in April. We had lots of fun!



## MEMBERSHIP

Our Historical Society and Museum currently needs your help.  
We have several projects that require your support.

These projects include:

- repair leaking roofs
- upkeep of historical buildings
- upgrading technology
- professional software for collections care
- more energy efficient lighting to create safer work areas
- repairs to heating and cooling units within the museum
- repairs and upgrades to our storage warehouse
- archival safe supplies

We currently receive \$80,000 from the Clay County General Fund. However, just **wages and utilities cost us \$90,000** each year leaving us unable to complete any of the projects above. At our regular spending rate, our budget may run out as early as October forcing us to close the Museum doors for the rest of the year.

Become a member of the Historical Society and help keep us free and open to **EVERYONE!**

# Support the Clay County Museum

## Individual Form

- \_\_\_ **Ruby Level** - \$2,000 Includes sponsoring . . . \_\_\_ **Diamond Level** - \$1,000 Includes sponsoring . . .
- repairs to the Museum's roof
  - a speaker at the Historical Society's annual meeting
  - a traveling exhibit
  - a new exhibit in the Museum
  - annual membership in the Historical Society
- and*
- annual membership in the Historical Society

- \_\_\_ **Platinum Level** - \$1,500 Includes sponsoring . . . \_\_\_ **Gold Level** - \$500 Includes sponsoring . . .
- repairs to the Museum's roof
  - a speaker at the Historical Society's annual meeting
  - a traveling exhibit
  - replacement glass in Museum display cases
  - annual membership in the Historical Society
- and*
- annual membership in the Historical Society

- \_\_\_ **Silver Level** - Adult \$15, Under 12 yrs \$5 Includes . . . \_\_\_ **Emerald Level** - \$40 Includes sponsoring . . .
- annual membership in the Historical Society
  - repairs to the Museum's roof
  - annual membership in the Historical Society

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

10

*STATISTICS* For This Quarter

104

Visitors  
From

462

Artifacts  
Donated

12

Research  
Requests

8

&

3

States & Countries

144

Hours of  
Research

amazon smile

- Go to smile.amazon.com
- Set the Clay County Historical Society as your charity
- Shop at smile.amazon.com
- Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases directly to us at no extra cost to you!

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Ways to Donate  
At Home

Donate with **PayPal**

We are now accepting donations through PayPal! Find us as Clay County Historical Society in the PayPal Giving Fund.

**ANNIVERSARY EVENTS**

**Clay County Museum is celebrating our 5th Anniversary in our new building!**

Help us celebrate the artifacts we've had on display these past 5 years with a coloring contest! All coloring pages show an item from a museum exhibit. Contest is open to all children K-5th grade.

1. Coloring pages will be available at the museum starting **June 15th**.
2. One entry per child.
3. The back of each coloring page **must include**:
  - a. the child's name and grade
  - b. a phone number for a parent/guardian
  - c. the child's interpretation of what the item on the coloring page is and what it was used for
4. Each grade will be judged separately.
5. Each grade will have 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners.
6. Coloring pages will be judged anonymously.

Coloring pages must be turned in by: **August 1st**

Prizes will include: Water Bottles, Rex Theater passes, and more

Winners will be announced: August 15th

Any questions or concerns: please contact the Museum at (786) 632-3786.

## ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

### Find a piece of Clay County History!

The Clay County Historical Society is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year! In honor of our anniversary we are holding the 1st Annual Clay County Historical Society Scavenger Hunt. We want you to find a piece of advertising from a Clay County business from the last 50 years.

#### Rules:

1. Item must be advertising a business from the past 50 years but is no longer in operation.
2. The advertising on the item must be **visible/readable**.
3. Item must be from **Clay County!**
4. Item must be donated to the museum to receive an entry into the drawing.
5. Drawing will be for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place.
6. One entry per person.
7. Open to all ages. Under 18 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Prizes are: \$50 for 1st place, \$25 for 2nd place, and \$15 for 3rd place

Item must be brought into the museum by: **September 1st**

Winners will be announced: on Piotique

Any questions or concerns: please contact the Museum at (785) 632-3786.

## Contact Us

### Address

518 Lincoln Ave  
Clay Center, KS 67432

### Museum Hours

Tues - Sun      1:00 pm – 5:00 pm  
Free Admission

### Contact

(785) 632-3786  
ccmuseum@twinvalley.net  
www.claycomuseum.com

## Board Members

President: Amy Levendofske

Vice-President: Kerri Spielman

Treasurer: Terri Parry

Secretary: Pat Gilbert

Mike Bulk

Deb Hammond

Carol Laffery

Reuben Lang'at

Wayne Link

Marlin Mugler

Tom Nelson

Jennifer Pfizenmaier

### Clay County Museum

518 Lincoln Ave  
Clay Center, KS 67432

Return Service Requested